Investment for infrastructure in NLD markets

3218. SHRIMATI KAMLA MANHAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether National Long Distance (NLD) market requires a lot of investments in creating infrastructure;

(b) if so, what are the total investments made by NLD operators in creating infrastructure in the country;

(c) what is the total NLD capacity currently available in India and what are the current utilisation levels;

(d) whether the current infrastructure is sufficient to cater to the projected demand during the next three years; and

(e) if not, the steps being taken by the Government to create more infrastructures in NLD market?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) As per available information, the total investment made by National Long Distance (NLD) Operators in creating infrastructure in the country is approximately Rs. 17, 657 crores.

(c) The total NLD capacity currently available in India is reported to the order of 6.50 lakhs Route KMs (RKM) with capacity utilisation varying from route to route and ranging from 10% to 50% of the capacity.

(d) and (e) The demand for infrastructure in National Long Distance (NLD) sector is related to various factors including expansion of cellular and basic service, business processing outsource industry, knowledge processing outsource industry and other information technology enabled services. The present available capacity is likely to be utilized during the next three years. The Government has recently liberalized entry and other conditions for new NLD service providers.

Production of handsets of mobile phones

3219. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that India depends for the production of handsets of mobile phones on foreign companies;

(b) if so, what measures are being taken to encourage indigenous production thereof;

(c) the number of Indian companies who are producing such handsets;

(d) the reason that the domestic efforts at manufacturing of handsets are being blocked; and

(e) the detail thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) To encourage indigenous manufacture of mobile phones, the government has exempted all inputs required for the manufacture of mobile phones from customs duty. Excise duty has also been exempted on manufacture of mobile phones.

(c) Two companies, namely LG and Elcoteq have reported commencement of production of handsets.

(d) and (e) There is no blockage to domestic efforts ti encourage domestic manufacture of handsets. A number of leading companies Nokia, Motorola, Samsung, etc. have taken steps to manufacture mobile handsets in India.

Promotion of broadband in Karnataka

3220. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken so far by B.S.N.L. in Karnataka to promote the use of broadband connections in Karnataka; and

(b) the amount spent so far and proposed to be spent in this regard during 2005-06 in Karnataka?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEELAHMAD): (a) Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) had launched its broadband service under the brand name of Data One on 14.01.2005. Presently, broadband service has been launched by BSNL in 15 cities of Karnataka with a customer base of 44313 connections. The same is planned to be extended to all district headquarters of Karnataka in a progressive manner. The important measures being taken by BSNL to boost usage of broadband services in